

MRS. ANNE W. ANGUS.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 267.]

MARCH 2, 1860.

Mr. SEDGEWICK, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom were referred the petition and papers of Mrs. Anne W. Angus, submit the following report :

Mrs. Angus is the widow of Captain Samuel Angus, late of the United States navy, who entered the service in 1799, became a lieutenant in 1807, a commander in 1813, and a captain in 1816. During his connexion with the service he served with distinguished bravery, and his name and deeds have received honorable mention in our naval history. This history states that he was wounded in several engagements with the enemy in the war of 1812, one of these wounds a severe one upon the head. The medical testimony submitted to your committee proves that this wound produced temporary fits of insanity, but he was not entirely incapacitated for duty, for subsequent to some of his attacks he performed a cruise during which "his mind was rational."

During one of his mental aberrations he wrote to the Secretary of the Navy a rude and insulting letter, for which he was summarily dismissed the service by President Monroe towards the close of his administration. As soon as he became aware of the injustice he had unintentionally committed in dismissing an officer for an act for which he was not responsible, he wrote to his successor, Mr. Adams, urging the restoration of Captain Angus to the naval service, saying, "I am satisfied that it comports with justice, as well as humanity, to reinstate him." He was not, however, reinstated, but was allowed a pension during life, which, had he not been dismissed, he would have been entitled to as an invalid pensioner, in addition to his pay. In consequence of his dying out of service, his widow was deprived of right to a pension for life or widowhood under the existing laws, and was obliged to apply to Congress for the passage of a special act, which she did, but was not successful until nearly nine years after his death, when a five years' pension was granted her, which was renewed for a further period of five years, and expired on the 4th March, 1859.

The petitioner asserts that her pension was not adequate to meet the expenses of herself and family, and, compelled by her necessities and the reparation which she thinks is due for the wrong inflicted on her husband and family, she asks to be placed in all respects as to the pay of a pension as she would have been if her husband had not been dismissed the service.

Your committee are satisfied, from President Monroe's letter, that had he been fully aware of the true condition of Captain Angus he would not have dismissed him, and the claim now made could not have arisen. Your committee feel satisfied that an unintentional wrong and disgrace was inflicted on an officer who deserved his country's honors and sympathy. This case seems to stand alone and presses itself with peculiar force and urgency on the justice and equity of Congress. It is fully sustained by the evidence accompanying the petition, and may be summed up in a few words. A courageous and gallant officer, while fighting the battles of his country, receives a wound which enfeebles his reason; and that while entitled to the sympathy, honor, protection, and gratitude of his country, he is, under a misapprehension of facts, disgraced by a dismissal from the service which he had adorned, robbed of his pay, and his widow and children deprived for nine years of the pension they would otherwise have received. The petitioner alleges that during the past year she and her family have been dependant upon friends for support, her pension having expired last March.

It appears that her present claim was first presented to the 34th Congress, and a bill reported from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, but not finally acted on. During the last Congress a bill was again reported from the Committee on Naval Affairs, but not acted on. Your committee now report the accompanying bill granting the prayer of the petitioner, and recommend its passage.